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                 in Palestine

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1. The response of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was prompt and spontaneous when hostilities started in Palestine. In order to contribute to the Arab cause, a general meeting of all Sudanese parties quickly was organized and took place at the Grand Hotel, Khartoum. This meeting was followed by another in the Omdurman Mosque, which resulted in the formation of the Sudan Central Palestine Committee. Under the direction of this Committee considerable enthusiasm for this cause was aroused, and contributions of men and money started to arrive at headquarters from the most remote points. This work proceeded with favorable results all through the spring and summer months of 1948.
2. The Umma Party, which at first had taken an active interest in this work to the extent of collaborating with its rival, the Ashiqa Party, gradually assumed a lukewarm attitude toward the events in Palestine, withheld its support in August 1948, and finally attacked the Committee and the men at the head of it. The Umma action was prompted by mistrust, and resulted in the disintegration of the movement. Actually, very few contributions in men and money were made for the Arab cause in Palestine after September 1948. The Umma Party charged that Hamid Bey Salih, the commander of the Sudanese volunteers, was taking orders from the Ashiqa Party, which in turn received instructions from Egypt. The Umma Party's position was that the blood of Sudanese nationals should not be expended for this cause, as Sudanese volunteers were being recruited for the Egyptian Army. According to the Umma Party, Egypt is a foreign nation and a soldier serving a foreign nation, in return for a monthly salary, is nothing but a mercenary. The Umma Party further charged that Egypt had encouraged the recruiting of Sudan volunteers because not all of the Egyptian forces could be released to fight in Palestine, on account of the unsettled internal situation in Egypt. The Umma Party also feared that Sudanese volunteers would be used by the Egyptian Government to subdue social disturbances in Egypt, thus creating contempt among Egyptian citizens for the Sudanese volunteers. Events proved that not all of the Umma suspicions were justified, but they served to neutralize effectively the Sudan's efforts, source states.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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3. Finally, the Umma Party demanded that the Sudan Central Palestine Committee appoint a subcommittee of ex-army men to supervise the volunteers, because such a body could shoulder the responsibility and could also deal with the Arab League in the name of the whole of the Sudan. Since this warning was not heeded, the Umma Party continued to attack the leaders at the head of this committee, arguing that they were bringing shame on their compatriots for the sake of personal gain. The Party threatened that, if the heads of the committee did not stop their activities, it would demand that the Sudan Government deal with the situation.
4. The Sudan Central Palestine Committee had made an initial contribution of £E 10,000 in April 1948 to the Arab Higher Committee. This was followed by a second installment of £E 5,000 in June and, in response to urgent appeals from the Arab Higher Committee, the Sudan Central Palestine Committee sent a further contribution of £E 3,000 and vaguely promised more. The Arab Higher Committee's appeal enumerated atrocities committed by the Zionists. At this time the Committee made an appeal to the general public for more assistance for the Arab cause and, although collections in Khartoum were good, the enthusiasm of the people was dampened by rumors, later substantiated, that corruption existed within the Committee. A sum amounting to several thousand pounds in this manner was misappropriated by individual committee members to finance Ashiqqa Party undertakings, source states. As late as September 1948 the Sudan Central Committee continued to receive remittances, totalling £E 4,000, from outlying districts, of which Juba was one of the last to contribute. Mistrusting the handling of funds by the Committee, numerous persons made direct contributions to the Arab Higher Committee in Cairo, but after September 1948 the pace of collections slackened considerably and remittances practically ceased. The total sum received from all Sudanese sources was estimated at much less than £E 100,000, a goal which could have been attained easily if the Umma Party had not withheld its support, source claims. The withdrawal of this support was the death blow to the Sudan's contribution to the Arab cause in Palestine.
5. Hamid Bey Salih, a retired colonel of the Sudan Defense Force was instrumental in recruiting volunteers. By the middle of June 1948 five groups of volunteers had been dispatched to Cairo and, in recognition of his work, Salih was promoted by King Faruq to the rank of miralai (brigadier). There were also other promotions in the lower ranks. The sixth group of volunteers, composed of sixty men and two officers, left Khartoum early in July 1948 but, after that date the recruitment of volunteers also slackened. The Umma Party, meanwhile, had been attacking the Sudan Government for not finding adequate work for these former soldiers of the Sudan Defense Forces after their demobilization. The Party demanded that the Government stop the "criminal actions" of individuals professing to be patriotic, but actually carrying out the dictates of Egypt. The Umma Party explained that it would not have objected if the Committee responsible for the recruiting had wanted these volunteers to fight for the liberation of the Arabs in Palestine as a separate unit. No more than six hundred officers and men were estimated to have left for Cairo up to the end of August 1948, and recruitment did not expand after that date.

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6. Late in August 1948 it was rumored that a platoon of Sudanese volunteers, including their commanding officer, had been killed or captured by the Zionists. Under pressure of persistent attacks on Hamid Bey Salih by the Umma Party for withholding information regarding casualties, the commander finally released the first death list, which contained the names of only one officer and three men.

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